THE FATAL CURIOSITY

A TRAGEDY

BY

GEORGE LILLO

WITH

A SHORT ACCOUNT OF THE AUTHOR'S LIFE

AND AN

EXPLANATORY INDEX

OF SOME EXPRESSIONS.

He knew no art no rule, but warmly thought
From passion's force, and as he thought he wrote.
HAMMOND.

NORDHAUSEN
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ADVERTISEMENT.

The merit and ſuperiority of *Lillo's* theatrical pieces are ſo univerſally acknowledged amongſt us, that not even the miſerable German translation, which has been coming out ſome years ago, where every ſpark of the poet's genius is extinguiſhed, has been able enough to diminiſh a reputation ſo well eſtabliſhed. Though diveſted of their original elegance and correctneſs of ſtyle, they have been repreſented not without conſiderable applauſe on our ſtages; and every private reader has been charmed with the writer's natural manner, moved by his tender ſentiments and inſtructed by his morals. 'Twas for

this reaſon, I was induced to divulge by way of reprinting one of his moſt accompliſhed pieces; and I dare hope, the receiving by this means the following tragedy will be agreeable to the public, and the more ſo, as the Engliſh edition of his works cannot be ſuppoſed to be in many hands. Beſides finding the ſtyle in this play to be extremely eaſy, it ſeemed to me very accommodated for the ſervice of ſuch as apply themſelves to ſtudying this language. And with this view I have ſubjoined a ſmall Dictionary explaining thoſe manners of ſpeaking, which, to what I ſuppoſed, would be moſt difficult to thoſe, for the uſe of whom the preſent impreſſion is particularly undertaken. There are alſo prefixed ſome memoirs of the life and writings of our dramatiſt, whoſe veracity muſt wholly depend on that of the neweſt publiſher of his works.

THE EDITOR.

Some

Some Account of the life and writings of GEORGE LILLO.

As the part our Author acted in the world, was not attended with thoſe ſplendours, that are given by ſuperior rank or fortune, and his own merit often undervalued and abaſed by a long train of the moſt fatal accidents, 'tis no wonder, that there are but few things can be ſaid with ſome degree of certainty or even probability about his life. And if there were, the entertainment they might probably afford, would prove at length as ſcant and devoid of inſtruction. Therefore, the ſubject of the enſuing eſſay will rather be a ſhort enumeration of *Lillo's* writings, than a narrative of circumſtances relating to his life.

It is agreed on all hands, that he was born February 4th in the year 1693 near *Moorfields*, where his father lived a jeweller, whoſe profeſſion he learned and practis'd alſo for a long ſpace of his life.

It is very ſingular, that no poetical effort of his ſhould appear in print, at leaſt under his name, till the year 1730, when he produced a Ballad Opera, called *Silvia or the Country-Burial*, which was acted at the Theatre Royal in *Lincoln's-Inn-Fields*. This is one of the beſt dramatic pieces of that kind, which had till then appeared, written in imitation of the celebrated *Beggar's Opera;* for *Silvia* has invention in its fable, ſimplicity in its manners, gaiety in its incidents, and variety as well as truth of character; but what will ſtill more recommend it to the judicious, this Paſtoral Burleſque Serio-Comic Opera was written with a view to inculcate the love of truth and virtue, and a hatred of vice and falſehood. Notwithſtanding the apparent merit of this play, it met with little ſucceſs.

About a year after *Lillo* offer'd his *London Merchant or the Hiſtory of George Barnwell* to Mr. Theophilus *Cibber*, manager of a company of comedians then acting at the *Drury-Lane* Theatre during the ſummer-ſeaſon. The Author's friends, though they were well acquainted with the great beauty of *Barnwell*, could not be without their fears for the ſucceſs of a play, which was formed on a new plan. The ſubject of it being drawn from an old ballad perhaps too well known at that time, and the characters not anſwering

ſwering the ſublimity and grandeur of the tragic ſcene, this attempt was no way likely to find much approbation. 'Tis true, ſome of the beſt dramatic poets, ſuch as *Otway*, *Southern*, *Rowe* had lowered before him the buſkin, and fitted it to characters in life inferior to kings and heroes; yet no writer had ventured to deſcend ſo low as to introduce the character of a merchant or his apprentice into a tragedy.

With reſpect to this attempt, I will here tranſcribe a paſſage out of his dedication of *Barnwell*, wherein he is making a very ſatisfactory juſtification of it. "Tragedy, ſays he, is ſo far from loſing its dignity, by being accommodated to the circumſtances of the generality of mankind, that it is more truly auguſt in proportion to the extent of its influence, and the numbers that are properly affected by it; as it is more truly great to be the inſtrument of good to many, who ſtand in need of our aſſiſtance, than to a very ſmall part of that number."

The Author's attempt was fully juſtified by his ſucceſs; plain ſterling ſenſe, joined to many happy ſtrokes of nature and paſſion, ſupplied the imagined deficiencies of art, and more tears were ſhed at the repreſentation of this home-ſpun Drama, than at all the elaborate imitations of ancient

fables and ancient manners by the learned moderns. The *London Merchant* was acted more than twenty nights together in the hotteſt part of the year to crowded houſes.

One circumſtance which happened the firſt night is ſo ſingular, that it ought not to be forgotten. Certain witty and facetious perſons brought up large quantities of the ballad of *Geo. Barnwell*, with an intent to make a ludicrous compariſon between the old ſong and the new tragedy; but ſo forcible and ſo pathetic were the ſcenes, that theſe merry gentlemen were quite diſappointed and aſhamed; they were obliged to throw away their ballads, and take out their handkerchiefs.

Pope, who was preſent at the firſt acting of *Barnwell*, very candidly obſerved, that *Lillo* had never deviated from propriety, except in a few paſſages in which he aimed at a greater elevation of language, than was conſiſtent with character and ſituation.

Encouraged by the great encomiums beſtow'd upon this play, *Lillo* ventured upon a ſubject more arduous and ſublime. About three or four years after he wrote the *Chriſtian Hero*, which was acted at *Drury-Lane* with tolerable ſucceſs. The plot of the tragedy is to be found in the hiſtory of the Turks.

Turks. The characters are in general ſtrongly marked; and ſome pathetic ſcenes of the *Chriſtian Hero* would not diſgrace the compoſitions of the moſt eſteemed tragic poets.

Towards the end of the acting-ſeaſon in 1736 the *Fatal Curioſity*, one of *Lillo's* moſt affecting and elaborate tragedies, was repreſented at the little Theatre in the *Haymarket*, at the time when Henry *Fielding*, the Engliſh Cervantes, was manager of that playhouſe.

'Tis not eaſy to gueſs, why this excellent piece was not exhibited at one of the Theatres Royal, as our Author's character as a writer was by this time well eſtabliſh'd. It cannot be doubted but that *Lillo* applied to the managers of the more regular Theatres, and had been rejected, ſo that he was reduced to the neceſſity of having his play acted at an inferior play-houſe, and by perſons not ſo well ſkilled in their profeſſion as the players of the eſtabliſhed Theatres.

However, *Mr. Fielding* who had a juſt ſenſe of our Poet's merit, and who had often in his humorous pieces (particularly in *Joſeph Andrews*) laughed at thoſe ridiculous and abſurd criticks, who could not probably underſtand the merit of *Barnwell*, becauſe the ſubject was low, treated *Lillo* with great politeneſs and friendſhip. He took upon himſelf the management of the play, and the inſtruction of the actors.

The plot of the *Fatal Curioſity*, like that of *Barnwell*, is taken from private life. An unhappy old man and his wife who lived at *Penryn* in *Cornwall*, impatient under their misfortunes and rendered deſperate by extreme poverty, murdered their gueſt, a ſailor juſt returned from the Indies, for the ſake of his wealth; and to aggravate the atrociouſneſs of the crime, upon examination the murdered perſon prov'd to be their own ſon.

The language of this tragedy is more elevated than that of any of our Author's works; in ſome few paſſages it muſt be owned, that it is too rich and flowery, and partakes rather of the deſcriptive than the familiar ſtyle, ſuited to the ſubject and characters. However, the Author has ſeldom indulged himſelf in this luxuriancy of fancy; for in general his ſtyle is plain and eaſy, though vigorous and energetic.

In ſpite of all the friendly endeavours of *Fielding*, who warmly recommended this play to his friends and the public, and preſented the Author with a fine prologue, it met with very little ſucceſs at its firſt repreſentation, which was owing in all probability to its being brought on in the latter part of the ſeaſon, when the public had been ſatiated with a long run of Paſquin. However *Fielding* generouſly perſiſted to ſerve the man whom he had once eſpouſed; he tacked the *Fatal Curioſity* to his *hiſtorical Regiſter*,

giſter, which was play'd with great ſucceſs in the enſuing winter. The tragedy was acted to more advantage than before, and was often repeated, to the emolument of the Author, and with the approbation of the audience.

In 1738 *Lillo* gave to the players, acting during the ſummer-ſeaſon at *Covent-Garden*, his play of *Marina*, taken from an old tragedy attributed to *Shakeſpeare*, called *Pericles, Prince of Tyr.*

It is true, the firſt editors of this great father of the Engliſh ſtage rejected *Pericles* and ſeveral other pieces, that had been printed with his name to them during his life-time. But 'tis moſt likely that *Shakeſpeare* reviſed this old drama, and gave a few touches of his own inimitable pencil, that he added or altered a character or two, and wrote a ſcene here and there, which, like the luſtre of *Baſſianus's* ring in the cavern, illuminated the ſurrounding darkneſs.

The preſerving from oblivion ſcenes, which will give perpetual pleaſure in the reading, is undoubtedly meritorious, and *Lillo* deſerves as much praiſe for ſaving the ſketches of a *Shakeſpeare*, as he who carefully keeps amongſt his rarities a maimed ſtatue of an illuſtrious artiſt.

Lillo died September the third, 1739.

He juſt lived to finiſh his tragedy of *Elmerick*, which he left to the care of his friend Mr. John *Gray*,

Gray, a bookfeller who was firſt a diſſenting miniſter, and afterwards, upon his complying with the terms of admiſſion into the Church of England, Rector of a living at *Rippon* in *Yorkſhire*. The piece was accordingly publiſhed by his friend, and at the Author's dying requeſt, dedicated to *Frederick*, Prince of *Wales*. *Marcellus* and *Germanicus* were not more beloved by the Romans, than *Frederick* was by the people of England. His eaſineſs of acceſs, his readineſs to ſuccour the diſtreſſed, his encouragement of arts and ſciences, and many other public and private virtues endeared him to perſons of all ranks.

In order to expreſs the veneration *Lillo* had for this prince, he in a Maſque, called *Britannia and Batavia*, exerted his poetical ſkill on the marriage of his Royal Highneſs to the Princeſs of Saxe-Gotha.

Long after *Lillo's* death, in the year 1762 a tragedy of his: *Arden of Feverſham*, which ſeems to be his laſt compoſition, was brought on the ſtage.

The neweſt and complete edition, containing theſe eight dramatic pieces I have hitherto given notice of, is *London, 1775. 2 Voll. in 8.*

THE

THE

FATAL CURIOSITY.

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PROLOGUE

Written by HENRY FIELDING, *Esq.*

The Tragic Muse has long forgot to please
With SHAKESPEARE'S *nature, or with* FLETCHER'S *ease:*
No passion mov'd, thro' five long acts you sit,
Charm'd with the poet's language, or his wit.
Fine things are said, no matter whence they fall;
Each single character might speak them all.

But from this modern fashionable way,
To-night, our author begs your leave to stray.
No fustian hero rages here to-night;
No armies fall, to fix a tyrant's right:
From lower life we draw our scene's distress:
— Let not your equals move your pity less!
Virtue distrest in humbler state support;
Nor think she never lives without the court.

Tho' to our scenes no royal robes belong,
And tho' our little stage as yet be young,

Throw both your ſcorn and prejudice aſide;
Let us with favour, not contempt be try'd;
Thro' the firſt acts a kind attention lend,
The growing ſcene ſhall force you to attend;
Shall catch the eyes of every tender fair,
And make them charm their lovers with a tear.
The lover too by pity ſhall impart
His tender paſſion to his fair one's heart:
The breaſt which others anguiſh cannot move,
Was ne'er the ſeat of friendſhip, or of love.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE.

MEN.

Old WILMOT.
Young WILMOT,
EUSTACE.
RANDAL.

WOMEN.

AGNES, Wife to old WILMOT.
CHARLOT.
MARIA.

Viſitors Men and Women.

SCENE, PENRYN *in Cornwall.*

FATAL CURIOSITY.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

A Room in WILMOT's *House.*

Old WILMOT *alone.*

The day is far advanc'd; the chearful sun
Pursues with vigour his repeated course,
No labour lessening nor no time decaying
His strength, or splendor: evermore the same,
From age to age his influence sustains
Dependent worlds, bestows both life and motion
On the dull mass that forms their dusky orbs,
Chears them with heat, and gilds them with his brightness.
Yet man, of jarring elements compos'd,
Who posts from change to change, from the first hour
Of his frail being till his dissolution,
Enjoys the sad prerogative above him,
To think, and to be wretched — What is life,

To him that's born to die! or what that wisdom
Whose perfection ends in knowing we know nothing!
Meer contradiction all! A tragic farce,
Tedious tho' short, and without art elab'rate,
Ridiculously sad —

Enter RANDAL.

Where hast been, Randal?

RANDAL.

Not out of Penryn, Sir; but to the strand,
To hear what news from *Falmouth* since the storm
Of wind last night.

Old WILMOT.

It was a dreadful one.

RANDAL.

Some found it so. A noble ship from India,
Ent'ring into the harbour, run upon a rock,
And there was lost.

Old WILMOT.

What came of those on board her?

RANDAL.

Some few are sav'd, but much the greater part,
'Tis thought, are perish'd.

Old

Old WILMOT.

They are paſt the fear
Of future tempeſts, or a wreck on ſhore;
Thoſe who eſcap'd are ſtill expos'd to both.

RANDAL.

But I've heard news, much ſtranger than this ſhip-wreck,
Here in Cornwall. The brave Sir Walter *Raleigh*,
Being arriv'd at *Plymouth* from *Guiana*,
A moſt unhappy voyage, has been betray'd
By baſe Sir Lewis *Stukely*, his own kinſman,
And ſeiz'd on by an order from the court;
And 'tis reported, he muſt loſe his head,
To ſatisfy the Spaniards.

Old WILMOT.

Not unlikely;
His martial genius does not ſuit the times.
There's now no inſolence that Spain can offer,
But to the ſhame of this pacifick reign
Poor England muſt ſubmit to — Gallant man!
Poſterity perhaps may do thee juſtice,
And praiſe thy courage, learning and integrity,
When thou'rt paſt hearing: thy ſucceſsful ennemies,
Much ſooner paid, have their reward in hand,
And know for what they labour'd. — Such events

Muſt, queſtionleſs, excite all thinking men,
To love and practiſe virtue!

RANDAL.

Nay, 'tis certain,
That virtue ne'er appears ſo like itſelf,
So truly bright and great, as when oppreſt.

Old WILMOT.

I underſtand no riddles. — Where's your miſtreſs?

RANDAL.

I ſaw her paſs the high-ſtreet t'wards the minſter.

Old WILMOT.

She's gone to viſit Charlot — She doth well.
In the ſoft boſom of that gentle maid,
There dwells more goodneſs than the rigid race
Of moral pedants e'er believ'd or taught.
With what amazing conſtancy and truth,
Doth ſhe ſuſtain the abſence of our ſon,
Whom more than life ſhe loves! how ſhun for him,
Whom we ſhall ne'er ſee more, the rich and great!
Who own her charms more than ſupply the want

Of

Of ſhining heaps, and ſigh to make her happy.
Since our misfortunes, we have found no friend,
None who regarded our diſtreſs, but her;
And ſhe, by what I have obſerv'd of late,
Is tired, or exhauſted — curſt condition!
To live a burden to one only friend,
And blaſt her youth with our contagious woe!
Who that had reaſon, ſoul, or ſenſe, would bear it
A moment longer! — then this honeſt wretch! —
I muſt diſmiſs him — Why ſhould I detain
A grateful, gen'rous youth to periſh with me?
His ſervice may procure him bread elſewhere,
Tho' I have none to give him. — Prithee, Randal,
How long haſt thou been with me?

RANDAL.

Fifteen years.
I was a very child when firſt you took me,
To wait upon your ſon, my dear young maſter!
I oft have wiſh'd, I'd gone to India with him;
Tho' you, deſponding, give him o'er for loſt.

(Old WILMOT *wipes his eyes.*

I am to blame — this talk revives your ſorrow
For his abſence.

Old WILMOT.

How can that be reviv'd,
Which never died?

RANDAL.

The whole of my intent
Was to confeſs your bounty, that ſupplied
The loſs of both my parents: I was long
The object of your charitable care.

Old WILMOT.

No more of that: thou'ſt ſerv'd me longer ſince
Without reward: ſo that account is balanc'd,
Or rather I 'm thy debtor — I remember,
When poverty began to ſhow her face
Within theſe walls, and all my other ſervants,
Like pamper'd vermin from a falling houſe,
Retreated with the plunder they had gain'd,
And left me, too indulgent and remiſs
For ſuch ungrateful wretches, to be cruſh'd
Beneath the ruin they had help'd to make,
That you, more good than wife refus'd to leave me.

RANDAL.

Nay, I beſeech you, Sir!

Old

Old WILMOT.

With my diſtreſs,
In perfect contradiction to the world,
Thy love, reſpect and diligence increas'd;
Now all the recompence within my power,
Is to diſcharge thee, Randal, from my hard,
Unprofitable ſervice.

RANDAL.

Heaven forbid!
Shall I forſake you in your worſt neceſsity?—
Believe me, Sir, my honeſt ſoul abhors
The barb'rous thought.

Old WILMOT.

What! canſt thou feed on air?
I have not left wherewith to purchaſe food
For one meal more.

RANDAL.

Rather thon leave you thus,
I'll beg my bread, and live on others bounty
While I ſerve you.

Old WILMOT.

Down, down my ſwelling heart,
Or burſt in ſilence: 'tis thy cruel fate
Inſults thee by his kindneſs — he is innocent
Of all the pain it gives thee — Go thy ways —
I will no more ſuppreſs thy youthful hopes
Of riſing in the world.

RANDAL.

'Tis true, I'm young,
And never try'd my fortune, or my genius,
Which may perhaps find out ſome happy means,
As yet unthought of, to ſupply your wants.

Old WILMOT.

Thou tortur'ſt me — I hate all obligations
Which I can ne'er return — And who art thou,
That I ſhou'd ſtoop to take 'em from thy hand!
Care for thyſelf, but take no thought for me;
I will not want thee - trouble me no more.

RANDAL.

Be not offended, Sir, and I will go.
I ne'er repin'd at your commands before;
But, heaven's my witneſs, I obey you now
With ſtrong reluctance, and a heavy heart.
Farewell, my worthy maſter! *(Going.*

Old WILMOT.

Farewell — ſtay —
As thou art yet a ſtranger to the world,
Of which, alas! I've had too much experience,
I ſhou'd, methinks, before we part, beſtow
A little counſel on thee — Dry thy eyes —
If thou weep'ſt thus, I ſhall proceed no farther.

Doſt

Doſt thou aſpire to greatneſs, or to wealth,
Quit books and the unprofitable ſearch
Of wiſdom there, and ſtudy human kind:
No ſcience will avail thee without that;
But that obtain'd, thou need'ſt not any other.
This will inſtruct thee to conceal thy views,
And wear the face of probity and honour,
Till thou haſt gain'd thy end; which muſt be ever
Thy own advantage, at that man's expence
Who ſhall be weak enough to think thee honeſt.

RANDAL.

You mock me, ſure.

Old WILMOT.

I never was more ſerious.

RANDAL.

Why ſhould you counſel what you ſcorn'd to practiſe?

Old WILMOT.

Becauſe that fooliſh ſcorn has been my ruin.
I've been an idiot, but would have thee wiſer,
And treat mankind, as they would treat thee, Randal,
As they deſerve, and I've been treated by 'em.

Thou'ſt

Thou'ſt ſeen by me, and thoſe who now deſpiſe me,
How men of fortune fall, and beggars riſe;
Shun my example; treaſure up my precepts;
The world's before thee — be a knave, and proſper.
(After a long pauſe.)
What art thou dumb?

RANDAL.

Amazement ties my tongue.
Where are your former principles?

Old WILMOT.

No matter;
Suppoſe I have renounc'd 'em: I have paſſions,
And love thee ſtill; therefore would have thee think,
The world is all a ſcene of deep deceit,
And he who deals with mankind on a ſquare,
Is his own bubble, and undoes himſelf.
(Exit.

RANDAL.

Is this the man I thought ſo wiſe and juſt?
What teach, and counſel me to be a villain!
Sure grief has made him frantick, or ſome fiend
Aſſum'd his ſhape — I ſhall ſuſpect my ſenſes.
High-

High-minded he was ever, and improvident;
But pitiful and generous to a fault:
Pleaſure he lov'd, but honour was his idol.
O fatal change! O horrid transformation!
So a majeſtick temple ſunk to ruin,
Becomes the loathſome ſhelter and abode
Of lurking ſerpents, toads, and beaſts of prey:
And ſcaly dragons hiſs, and lions roar,
Where wiſdom taught, and muſick charm'd before. *(Exit.*

SCENE II.

A Parlour in CHARLOT'S *Houſe.*

CHARLOT *and* MARIA.

CHARLOT.

What terror and amazement muſt they feel
Who die by ſhipwreck!

MARIA.

'Tis a dreadful thought.

CHARLOT.

Ay, is it not, Maria! to deſcend,
Living and conſcious, to that wat'ry tomb?
Alas! had we no ſorrows of our own,
The frequent inſtances of others woe
Muſt give a gen'rous mind a world of pain.

But

But you forget you promis'd me to ſing.
Tho' chearfulneſs and I have long been ſtrangers,
Harmonious ſounds are ſtill delightful to me.
There is in melody a ſecret charm
That flatters, while it adds to my diſquiet,
And makes the deepeſt ſadneſs the moſt pleaſing.
There's ſure no paſſion in the human ſoul,
But finds its food in muſick — I wou'd hear
The ſong compos'd by that unhappy maid,
Whoſe faithful lover 'ſcap'd a thouſand perils
From rocks and ſands, and the devouring deep;
And after all, being arriv'd at home,
Paſſing a narrow brook, was drowned there,
And periſh'd in her ſight.

Song.

MAR. *Ceaſe, ceaſe, heart-eaſing tears;*
Adieu, you flatt'ring fears,
Which ſeven long tedious years
Taught me to bear.

Tears are for lighter woes;
Fear no ſuch danger knows,
As fate remorſeleſs ſhows,
Endleſs deſpair.

Dear

Dear cauſe of all my pain,
On the wide ſtormy main,
Thou waſt preſerv'd in vain,
Tho' ſtill ador'd;

Had'ſt thou died there unſeen
My blaſted eyes had been
Sav'd from the horrid'ſt ſcene,
Maid e'er deplor'd.

(CHARLOT *finds a letter.*

CHARLOT.

What's this? — a letter ſuperſcrib'd to me!
None could convey it here but you, Maria,
Ungen'rous, cruel maid! to uſe me thus!
To join with flatt'ring men to break my peace,
And perſecute me to the laſt retreat!

MARIA.

Why ſhould it break your peace, to hear the ſighs
Of honourable love, and know th'effects
Of your reſiſtleſs charms! — This letter is —

CHARLOT.

No matter whence — return it back unopen'd:

I have no love, no charms but for my Wilmot,
Nor would have any.

MARIA.

Strange infatuation!
Why ſhould you waſte the flower of your days
In fruitleſs expectation — Wilmot's dead;
Or living, dead to you.

CHARLOT.

I'll not deſpair.
Patience ſhall cheriſh hope, nor wrong his honour
By unjuſt ſuſpicion. I know his truth,
And will preſerve my own. But to prevent
All future, vain, officious importunity,
Know, thou inceſſant foe of my repoſe:
Wheter he ſleeps ſecure from mortal cares,
In the deep boſom of the boiſt'rous main,
Or toſt with tempeſts, ſtill endures its rage;
Wheter his weary pilgrimage by land
Has found an end, and he now reſts in peace
In earth's cold womb, or wanders o'er her face.
Be it my lot to waſte, in pining grief,
The remnant of my days for his known loſs,
Or live, as now, uncertain and in doubt.
No ſecond choice ſhall violate my vows:
High

High heaven, which heard them, and abhors the perjur'd,
Can witneſs, they were made without reſerve;
Never to be retracted, ne'er diſſolv'd
By accidents or abſence, time or death.

MARIA.

I know, and long have known, my honeſt zeal
To ſerve you, gives offence — but be offended —
This is no time for flatt'ry — did your vows
Oblige you to ſupport his gloomy, proud,
Impatient parents, to your utter ruin —
You well may weep to think on what you've done.

CHARLOT.

I weep to think that I can do no more
For their ſupport — what will become of 'em! —
The hoary, helpleſs, miſerable pair!

MARIA.

Then all theſe tears, this ſorrow is for them.

CHARLOT.

Taught by afflictions, I have learn'd to bear
Much greater ills, than poverty, with patience.
When luxury and oſtentation's baniſh'd,

The calls of nature are but few; and those
These hands, not us'd to labour, may sup-
ply.
But when I think on what my friends must
suffer,
My spirits fail, and I'm o'erwhelm'd with
grief.

MARIA.

What I wou'd blame, you force me to ad-
mire,
And mourn for you, as you lament for them.
Your patience, constancy, and resignation
Merit a better fate.

CHARLOT.

So pride would tell me,
And vain self-love, but I believe them not:
And if by wanting pleasure I have gain'd
Humility, I'm richer for my loss.

MARIA.

You have the heavenly art, still to improve
Your mind by all events — But here co-
mes one,
Whose pride seems to in crease with her mis-
fortunes.

Enter AGNES.

Her faded dress unfashionable fine
As ill conceals her poverty, as that
Strain'd

Strain'd complaiſance her haughty, ſwelling heart.
Tho' periſhing with want, ſo far from aſking,
She ne'er receives a favour uncompell'd,
And while ſhe ruins, ſcorns to be oblig'd:
She wants me gone, and I abhor her ſight.
(*Exit* MARIA.

CHARLOT.

This viſit's kind.

AGNES.

Few elſe would think it ſo:
Thoſe who would once have thought themſelves much honour'd
By the leaſt favour, tho' 'twere but a look,
I could have ſhewn them, now refuſe to ſee me.
'Tis miſery enough to be reduc'd
To the low level of the common herd,
Who, born to begg'ry, envy all above them;
But 'tis the curſe of curſes, to indure
The inſolent contempt of thoſe, we ſcorn.

CHARLOT.

By ſcorning, we provoke them to contempt;
And thus offend, and ſuffer in our turns:
We muſt have patience.

AGNES.

No, I ſcorn them yet.

But there's no end of ſuff'ring: who can ſay
Their ſorrows are compleat? my wretched huſband,
Tir'd with our woes, and hopeleſs of relief,
Grows ſick of life.

CHARLOT.

May gracious heaven ſupport him.

AGNES.

And, urg'd by indignation and deſpair,
Would plunge into eternity at once,
By foul ſelf-murder: his fix'd love for me,
Whom he would fain perſuade to ſhare his fate,
And take the ſame, uncertain, dreadful courſe,
Alone withholds his hand.

CHARLOT.

And may it ever!

AGNES.

I've known with him the two extremes of life,
The higheſt happineſs, and deepeſt woe,
With all the ſharp and bitter aggravations
Of ſuch a vaſt tranſition — ſuch a fall
In the decline of life! — I have as quick,
As exquiſite a ſenſe of pain as he,
And wou'd do any thing, but die, to end it;

But

But there my courage fails — death is the worſt
That fate can bring, and cuts off ev'ry hope.

CHARLOT.

We muſt not chuſe, but ſtrive to bear our lot
Without reproach, or guilt: but by one act
Of deſperation, we may overthrow
The merit we've been raiſing all our days;
And loſe our whole reward — and now, methinks,
Now more than ever, we have cauſe to fear,
And be upon our guard. The hand of heaven
Spreads clouds on clouds o'er our benighted heads,
And wrapt in darkneſs, doubles our diſtreſs.
I had, the night laſt paſt, repeated twice,
A ſtrange and awful dream: I would not yield
To fearful ſuperſtition, nor deſpice
The admonition of a friendly power
That wiſh'd my good.

AGNES.

I've certain plagues enough,
Without the help of dreams, to make me wretched.

CHARLOT.

I wou'd not ſtake my happineſs or duty
On their uncertain credit, nor on ought

But reaſon, and the known decrees of heaven.
Yet dreams have ſometimes ſhewn events to come,
And may excite to vigilance and care,
In ſome important hour, when all our weakneſs
Shall be attack'd, and all our ſtrength be needful,
To ſhun the gulph that gapes for our deſtruction,
And fly from guilt, and everlaſting ruin.
My viſion may be ſuch, and ſent to warn us,
Now we are try'd by multiply'd afflictions,
To mark each motion of our ſwelling hearts,
And not attempt to extricate ourſelves,
And ſeek deliverance by forbidden ways:
But keep out hopes and innocence entire,
Till we're diſmiſt to join the happy dead
In that bleſs'd world, where tranſitory pain
And frail imperfect virtue is rewarded
With endleſs pleaſure and conſummate joy;
Or heaven relieves us here.

AGNES.

Well, pray proceed;
You've rais'd my curioſity at leaſt.

CHARLOT.

Methought I ſat, in a dark winter's night,
My garments thin, my head and boſom bare,
On

On the wide ſummit of a barren mountain;
Defenceleſs and expos'd, in that high region,
To all the cruel rigours of the ſeaſon.
The ſharp bleak winds pierc'd thro' my ſhiv'ring frame
And ſtorms of hail, and ſleet, and driving rains
Beat with impetuous fury on my head,
Drench'd my chill'd limbs, and pour'd a deluge round me.
On one hand, ever gentle Patience ſat,
On whoſe calm boſom I declin'd my head;
And on the other, ſilent Contemplation.
At length, to my unclos'd and watchful eyes,
That long had roll'd in darkneſs, and oft rais'd
Their chearleſs orbs towards the ſtarleſs ſky,
And ſought for light in vain, the dawn appear'd;
And I beheld a man, an utter ſtranger,
But of a graceful and exalted mien,
Who preſs'd with eager tranſport to embrace me.
— I ſhunn'd his arms — but at ſome words he ſpoke,
Which I have now forgot, I turn'd again,
But he was gone — And oh! tranſporting ſight!
Your ſon, my deareſt Wilmot! fill'd his place.

AGNES.

If I regarded dreams, I ſhould expect
Some fair event from your's: I have heard nothing
That ſhould alarm you yet.

CHARLOT.

But what's to come,
Tho' more obſcure, is terrible indeed.
Methought we parted ſoon, and when I ſought him,
You and his father — Yes, you both were there —
Strove to conceal him from me: I purſued
You with my cries, and call'd on heaven and earth
To judge my wrongs, and force you to reveal
Where you had hid my love, my life, my Wilmot! —

AGNES.

Unleſs you mean t'affront me, ſpare the reſt.
'Tis juſt as likely Wilmot ſhoud return,
As we become your foes.

CHARLOT.

Far be ſuch rudeneſs
From Charlot's thoughts: but when I heard you name

Self-

Self-murder, it reviv'd the frightful image
Of ſuch a dreadful ſcene.

AGNES.

You will perſiſt! —

CHARLOT.

Excuſe me; I have done. Being a dream,
I thought, indeed, it cou'd not give offence.

AGNES.

Not when the matter of it is offenſive! —
You cou'd not think ſo, had you thought at all;
But I take nothing ill from thee — adieu;
I've tarried longer than I firſt intended,
And my poor huſband mourns the while alone. (*Exit* AGNES.

CHARLOT.

She's gone abruptly, and I fear, diſpleas'd.
The leaſt appearance of advice or caution
Sets her impatient temper in a flame.
When grief, that well might humble, ſwells our pride,
And pride increaſing, aggrevates our grief,
The tempeſt muſt prevail till we are loſt.
When heaven, incens'd, proclaims unequal war
With guilty earth, and ſends its ſhafts from far,

No bolt deſcends to ſtrike, no flame to burn
The humble ſhrubs that in low valleys mourn;
While mountain-pines, whoſe lofty heads aſpire
To fan the ſtorm, and wave in fields of fire,
And ſtubborn oaks that yield not to its force,
Are burnt, o'erthrown, or ſhiver'd in its courſe.

SCENE III.

The Town and Port of Penryn.

Young WILMOT *and* EUSTACE *in India habits.*

Young WILMOT.

Welcome, my friend! to Penryn: here we're ſafe.

EUSTACE.

Then we're deliver'd twice; firſt from the ſea,
And then from ſavage men, who, more remorſeleſs,
Prey on ſhipwreck'd wretches, and ſpoil and murder thoſe
Whom fatal tempeſts and devouring waves,
In all their fury, ſpar'd.

Young

Young WILMOT.

It is a ſcandal,
Tho' malice muſt acquit the better ſort,
The rude impoliſht people here in Cornwall
Have long lain under, and with too much juſtice:
Cou'd our ſuperiors find ſome happy means
To men dit, they would gain immortal honour.
For'tis an evil grown almoſt inveterate,
And aſks a bold and ſkillful hand to cure.

EUSTACE.

Your treaſure's ſafe, I hope.

Young WILMOT.

'Tis here, thank heaven!
Being in jewels, when I ſaw our danger,
I hit it in my boſom.

EUSTACE.

I obſerv'd you,
And wonder'd how you cou'd command your thoughts,
In ſuch a time of terror and confuſion.

Young WILMOT.

My thoughts were then at home — O England! England!
Thou ſeat of plenty, liberty and health,
With tranſport I behold thy verdant fields,

Thy

Thy lofty mountains rich with useful ore,
Thy numerous herds, thy flocks, and winding streams.
After a long and tedious absence, Eustace!
With what delight we breath our native air,
And tread the genial soil that bore us first.
'Tis said, the world is every wise man's country;
Yet after having view'd its various nations,
I'm weak enough still to prefer my own
To all I've seen beside — You smile, my friend,
And think, perhaps, 'tis instinct more than reason
Why be it so. Instinct preceded reason
In the wisest of us all, and may sometimes
Be much the better guide. But be it either;
I must confess, that even death itself
Appea'rd to me with twice its native horrors,
When apprehended in a foreign land.
Death is, no doubt, in ev'ry place the same;
Yet observation must convince us, most men,
Who have it in their power, chuse to expire
Where they first drew their breath.

EUSTACE.

Believe me, Wilmot,
Your grave reflections were not what I smil'd at;
I own their truth. That we're return'd to England

Affords

Affords me all the pleaſure you can feal
Merely on that account: yet I muſt think
A warmer paſſion gives you all this tranſport.
You have not wander'd, anxious and impatient,
From clime to clime, and compaſt ſea and land
To purchaſe wealth, only to ſpend your days
In idle pomp, and luxury at home:
I know thee better; thou art brave and wiſe,
And muſt have nobler Aims.

Young WILMOT.

O Euſtace! Euſtace!
Thou knoweſt, for I've confeſt to thee, I love;
But having never ſeen the charming maid,
Thou can'ſt not know the fierceneſs of my flame.
My hopes and fears, like the tempeſtuous ſeas,
That we have paſt, now mount me to the ſkies,
Now hurl me down from that ſtupendous height,
And drive me to the center. Did you know
How much depends on this important hour,
You wou'd not be ſurpriz'd to ſee me thus.
The ſinking fortune of our ancient houſe,
Which time and various accidents had waſted,

Com-

Compell'd me young to leave my native country,
My weeping parents, and my lovely Charlot,
Who rul'd, and muſt for ever rule my fate.
How I've improv'd, by care and honeſt commerce,
My little ſtock, you are in part a witneſs.
'Tis now ſeven tedious years, ſince I ſet forth;
And as th' uncertain courſe of my affairs
Bore me from place to place, I quickly loſt
The means of correſponding with my friends.
— O! ſhou'd my Charlot, doubtful of my truth,
Or in deſpair ever to ſee me more,
Have given herſelf to ſome more happy lover —
Diſtraction's in the thought! — Or ſhou'd my parents,
Griev'd for my abſence and oppreſt with want,
Have ſunk beneath their burden, and expir'd,
While I too late was flying to relieve them;
The end of all my long and weary travels,
The hope, that made ſucceſs itſelf a bleſſing,
Being defeated and for ever loſt;
What were the riches of the world to me?

EUSTACE.

The wretch who fears all that is poſſible
Muſt

Muſt ſuffer more than he who feels the worſt
A man can feel, who lives exempt from fear.
A woman may be falſe, and friends are mortal;
And yet your aged parents may be living,
And your fair miſtreſs conſtant.

Young WILMOT.

True, they may;
I doubt, but I deſpair not — No, my friend;
My hopes are ſtrong and lively as my fears,
And give me ſuch a proſpect of my happineſs,
As nothing but fruition can exceed:
They tell me, Charlot is as true as fair,
As good as wife, as paſſionate as chaſte;
That ſhe with fierce impatience, like my own,
Laments our long and painful ſeparation;
That we ſhall meet, never to part again;
That I ſhall ſee my parents, kiſs the tears
From their pale hallow cheeks, chear their ſad hearts,
And drive that gaping phantom, meagre want,
For ever from their board; crown all their days
To come with peace, with pleaſure, and abundance;
Receive their fond embraces and their bleſſings,
And be a bleſſing to 'em.

EUSTACE.

'Tis our weakneſs:
Blind to events, we reaſon in the dark,
And fondly apprehend what none e'er found,
Or ever ſhall, pleaſure and pain unmixt;
And flatter, and torment ourſelves by turns,
With what ſhall never be.

Young WILMOT.

I'll go this inſtant
To ſeek my Charlot, and explore my fate.

EUSTACE.

What in that foreign habit?

Young WILMOT.

That's a trifle,
Not worth my thoughts.

EUSTACE.

The hardſhips you've endur'd,
And your long ſtay beneath the burning zone,
Where one eternal ſultry ſummer reigns,
Have marr'd the native hue of your complexion:
Methinks you look more like a ſun-burnt Indian,
Than a Briton.

Young

Young WILMOT.

Well, 'tis no matter, Euſtace;
I hope my mind's not alter'd for the worſe;
And for my outſide — But inform me, friend,
When I may hope to ſee you.

EUSTACE.

When you pleaſe:
You'll find me at the inn.

Young WILMOT.

When I have learnt my doom, expect me there.
'Till then, farewell.

EUSTACE.

Farewell; ſucceſs attend you.
(*Exit* EUSTACE,

Young WILMOT.

"We flatter and torment ourſelves by turns,
"With what ſhall never be." Amazing folly!
We ſtand expos'd to many unavoidable
Calamities, and therefore fondly labour
T' increaſe their number, and inforce their weight,
By our fantaſtic hopes and groundleſs fears.

For one ſevere diſtreſs impos'd by fate,
What numbers doth tormenting fear create?
Deceiv'd by hope, Ixion like, we prove
Immortal joys, and ſeem to rival Jove;
The cloud diſſolv'd, impatient we complain,
And pay for fancied bliſs ſubſtantial pain.

ACT II.

SCENE I.

CHARLOT's *House.*

Enter CHARLOT *thoughtful; and ſoon after* MARIA *from the other ſide.*

MARIA.

Madam, a ſtranger in a foreign habit
Deſires to ſee you.

CHARLOT.

In a foreign habit —
'Tis ſtrange, and unexpected — but admit him.

(*Exit* MARIA.

Who can this ſtranger be? I know no foreigner.

Enter young WILMOT.

— Nor any man like this.

Young WILMOT.

Ten thouſand joys —

(*Going to embrace her.*

CHARLOT.

You are rude, Sir — pray forbear, and let me know
What buſineſs brought you here, or leave the place.

Young WILMOT.

She knows me not, or will not ſeem to know me. (*Aſide.*
Perfidious maid! am I forgot or ſcorn'd?

CHARLOT.

Strange queſtions from a man I never know!

Young WILMOT.

With what averſion, and contempt ſhe views me!
My fears are true; ſome other has her heart:
— She's loſt — my fatal abſence has undone me. (*Aſide.*
— O! could thy Wilmot have forgot thee, Charlot!

CHARLOT.

Ha! Wilmot! ſay! what do your words import?
O gentle ſtranger? eaſe my ſwelling heart
That elſe will burſt! canſt thou inform me ought —
What doſt thou know of Wilmot?

Young

YOUNG WILMOT.

This I know,
When all the winds of heaven ſeem'd to conſpire
Againſt the ſtormy main, and dreadful peals
Of rattling thunder deafen'd ev'ry ear,
And drown'd th' affrighten'd mariners loud cries;
While livid lightning ſpread its ſulphurous flames
Thro' all the dark horizon, and disclos'd
The raging ſeas incens'd to his deſtruction;
When the good ſhip in which he was embark'd,
Unable longer to ſupport the tempeſt,
Broke, and o'erwhelm'd by the impetuous ſurge,
Sunk to the oozy bottom of the deep,
And left him ſtruggling with the warring waves;
In that dread moment, in the jaws of death,
When his ſtrength fail'd, and ev'ry hope forſook him,
And his laſt breath preſs'd towards his trembling lips,
The neighbouring rocks, that echo'd to his moan,
Return'd no ſound articulate, but Charlot,

CHARLOT.

The fatal tempeſt, whoſe deſcription ſtrikes

The hearer with aſtoniſhment, is ceas'd;
And Wilmot is at reſt. The fiercer ſtorm
Of ſwelling paſſions that o'erwhelms the ſoul,
And rages worſe than the mad foaming ſeas
In which he periſh'd, ne'er ſhall vex him more,

Young WILMOT.

Thou ſeem'ſt to think he's dead; enjoy that thought;
Perſuade yourſelf that what you wiſh is true,
And triumph in your falſhood — yes, he's dead;
You were his fate. The cruel winds and waves,
That caſt him pale and breathleſs on the ſhore,
Spar'd him for greater woes — to know his Charlot,
Forgetting all her vows to him and heaven,
Had caſt him from her thoughts — then, then he died;
But never muſt have reſt. Ev'n now he wanders,
A ſad, repining, diſcontented ghoſt,
The unſubſtantial ſhadow of himſelf
And pours his plaintive groans in thy deaf ears,
And ſtalks, unſeen, before thee.

CHARLOT.

'Tis enough —
Deteſted falſhood now has done his worſt.
And art thou dead? — and wou'dſt thou die, my Wilmot!
For one thou thought'ſt unjuſt? — thou ſoul of truth!
What muſt be done? — which way ſhall I expreſs
Unutterable woe? or how convince
Thy dear departed ſpirit of the love,
Th' eternal love, and never-failing faith
Of thy much injur'd, loſt, deſpairing Charlot?

Young WILMOT.

Be ſtill, my flatt'ring heart; hope not too ſoon:
Perhaps I dream, and this is all illuſion.
(*Aſide.*

CHARLOT.

If, as ſome teach, the mind intuitive
Free from the narrow bounds and ſlaviſh ties
Of ſordid earth, that circumſcribe its power
While it remains below, roving at large
Can trace us to our moſt conceal'd retreat,
See all we act, and read our very thoughts
To thee, o Wilmot! kneeling I appeal,
If e'er I ſwerv'd in action, word or thought
From the ſevereſt conſtancy of truth,

Or ever wiſh'd to taſte a joy on earth
That center'd not in thee, ſince laſt we parted;
May we ne'er meet again, but thy loud wrongs
So cloſe the ear of mercy to my cries,
That I may never ſee thoſe bright abodes
Where truth and virtue only have admiſſion,
And thou inhabit'ſt now.

Young WILMOT.

Aſſiſt me, heaven!
Preſerve my reaſon, memory and ſenſe!
O moderate my fierce tumultuous joys,
Or their exceſs will drive me to diſtraction. —
O Charlot! Charlot! lovely, virtuous maid!
Can thy firm mind, in ſpite of time and abſence,
Remain unſhaken, and ſupport its truth;
And yet thy frailer memory retain
No image, no idea of thy lover?
Why doſt thou gaze ſo wildly? look on me;
Turn thy dear eyes this way; obſerve me well.
Have ſcorching climates, time, and this ſtrange habit
So chang'd, and ſo diſguis'd thy faithful Wilmot,
That nothing in my voice, my face, or mien,
Remains to tell my Charlot I am he?

(*Af-*

(After viewing him ſome time, ſhe approaches weeping, and gives him her hand; and then turning towards him, ſinks upon his boſom.)

Why doſt thou weep? why doſt thou tremble thus?
Why doth thy panting heart and cautious touch
Speak thee but half convinc'd? whence are thy tears?
Why art thou ſilent? canſt thou doubt me ſtill?

CHARLOT.

No, Wilmot! no; I'm blind with too much light:
O'ercome with wonder, and oppreſt with joy,
The ſtruggling paſſions barr'd the doors of ſpeech;
But ſpeech enlarg'd afford me no relief.
This vaſt profuſion of extreme delight,
Riſing at once, and burſting from deſpair,
Defies the aid of words, and mocks deſcription:
But for one ſorrow, one ſad ſcene of anguiſh,
That checks the ſwelling torrent of my joys,
I cou'd not bear the tranſport.

Young WILMOT.

Let me know it:

Give me my portion of thy ſorrow, Charlot!
Let me partake thy grief, or bear it for thee.

CHARLOT.

Alas! my Wilmot! theſe ſad tears are thine;
They flow for thy misfortunes. I am pierc'd
With all the agonies of ſtrong compaſſion,
With all the bitter anguiſh you muſt feel
When you ſhall hear your parents —

Young WILMOT.

Are no more?

CHARLOT.

You apprehend me wrong.

Young WILMOT.

Perhaps I do:
Perhaps you mean to ſay, the greedy grave
Was ſatisfied with one, and one is left
To bleſs my longing eyes — but which, my Charlot!
— And yed forbear to ſpeak, till I have thought —

CHARLOT.

Nay, hear me, Wilmot!

Young WILMOT.

I perforce muſt hear thee;
For

For I might think till death, and not determine,
Of two ſo dear which I cou'd bear to loſe.

CHARLOT.

Afflict yourſelf no more with groundleſs fears:
Your parents both are living, their diſtreſs,
The poverty to which they are reduc'd,
In ſpite of my weak aid, was what I mourn'd;
And that in helpleſs age, to them whoſe youth
Was crown'd with full proſperity, I fear,
Is worſe, much worſe than death.

Young WILMOT.

My joy's compleat!
My parents living, and poſſeſs'd of thee! —
From this bleſt hour, the happieſt of my life,
I'll date my reſt. My anxious hopes and fears,
My weary travels, and my dangers paſt,
Are now rewarded all: now I rejoice
In my ſucceſs, and count my riches gain.
For know, my ſoul's beſt treaſure! I have wealth
Enough to glut ev'n avarice itſelf:
No more ſhall cruel want, or proud contempt,

Oppreſs

Oppreſs the ſinking ſpirits, or inſult
The hoary heads of thoſe who gave me being.

CHARLOT.

'Tis now, O riches, I conceive your worth:
You are not baſe, nor can you be ſuperfluous,
But when miſplac'd in baſe and ſordid hands.
Fly, fly, my Wilmot! leave thy happy Charlot!
Thy filial pity, the ſighs and tears
Of thy lamenting parents call thee hence.

Young WILMOT.

I have a friend, the partner of my voyage,
Who, in the ſtorm laſt night, was ſhipwreck'd with me.

CHARLOT.

Shipwreck'd laſt night! — O you immortal powers! —
What have you ſuffer'd! How was you preſerv'd!

Young WILMOT.

Let that, and all my other ſtrange eſcapes
And perilous adventures, be the theme
Of many a happy winter-night to come.
My preſent purpoſe was t'intreat my angel,
To know this friend, this other better Wilmot:

And

And come with him this evening to my father's:
I'll ſend him to thee.

CHARLOT.

I conſent with pleaſure,

Young WILMOT.

Heaven's! what a night! — how ſhall I bear my joy!
My parents, yours, my friends, all will be mine,
And mine, like water, air, or the free ſplendid ſun,
The undivided portion of you all.
If ſuch the early hopes, the vernal bloom,
The diſtant proſpect of my future bliſs,
Then what the ruddy autumn! — what the fruit! —
The full poſſeſſion of thy heavenly charms!
The tedious, dark, and ſtormy winter o'er;
The hind, that all its pinching hardſhips bore,
With tranſport ſees the weeks appointed bring
The chearful, promis'd, gay, delightful ſpring;
The painted meadows, the harmonious woods,
The gentle zephirs, and unbridled floods,

With

With all their charms, his raviſh'd thoughts employ,
But the rich harveſt muſt compleat his joy.

SCENE II.

A Street in Penryn.

RANDAL.

Poor! poor! and friendleſs! whiter ſhall I wander,
And to what point direct my views and hopes?
A menial ſervant! — no — what ſhall I live,
Here in this land of freedom, live diſtinguiſh'd,
And mark'd the willing ſlave of ſome proud ſubject,
And ſwell his uſeleſs train for broken fragments:
The cold remains of his ſuperfluous board? —
I wou'd aſpire to ſomething more and better —
Turn thy eyes then to the prolific ocean,
Whoſe ſpacious boſom opens to thy view;
There deathleſs honour, and unenvied wealth

Have

Have often crown'd the brave adventurer's
toils.
This is the native unconteſted right,
The fair inheritance of ev'ry Briton
That dares put in him claim — my choice
is made:
A long farewell to Cornwall, and to England.
If I return — But ſtay, what ſtranger's this
Who, as he views me, ſeems to mend his
pace?

Enter young WILMOT.

Young WILMOT.

Randal! the dear companion of my youth!
Sure laviſh fortune meens to give me all
I could deſire, or aſk for this bleſt day,
And leave me nothing to expect hereafter.

RANDAL.

Your pardon, Sir! I know but one on earth
Cou'd properly ſalute me by the title
You're pleas'd to give me, and I would not
think,
That you are he — that you are Wilmot —

Young WILMOT.

Why?

RANDAL.

Becauſe I cou'd not bear the diſappointment
Shou'd I be deceiv'd.

Young

Young WILMOT.

I'm pleas'd to hear it:
Thy friendly fears better expreſs thy thoughts
Than words cou'd do.

RANDAL.

O! Wilmot! O! my maſter!
Are you return'd?

Young WILMOT.

I have not yet embrac'd
My parents --- I ſhall ſee you at my father's.

RANDAL.

No, I'm diſcharg'd from thence --- O Sir!
ſuch ruin ---

Young WILMOT.

I've heard it all, and haſten to relieve 'em:
Sure heaven hath bleſs'd me to that very end:
I've wealth enough; nor ſhalt thou want a part.

RANDAL.

I have a part already --- I am bleſt
In your ſucceſs, and ſhare in all your joys.

Young WILMOT.

I doubt it not --- but tell me doſt thou think,
My

My parents not ſuſpecting my return,
That I may viſit them, and not be known?

RANDAL.

'Tis hard for me to judge. You are already
Grown ſo familiar to me, that I wonder
I knew you not at firſt: yet it may be;
For you're much alter'd, and they think you dead.

Young WILMOT.

This is certain; Charlot beheld me long,
And heard my loud reproaches and complaints
Without rememb'ring ſhe had ever ſeen me:
My mind at eaſe grows wanton: I wou'd fain
Refine on happineſs. Why may I not
Indulge my curioſity, and toy
If it be poſſible by ſeeing firſt
My parents as a ſtranger, to improve
Their pleaſure by ſurprize?

RANDAL.

It may indeed
Inhance your own, to ſee from what deſpair
Your timely coming, and unhop'd ſucceſs
Have given you power to raiſe them.

Young WILMOT.

I remember

E'er ſince we learn'd together, you excell'd
In writing fairly, and cou'd imitate
Whatever hand you ſaw with great exactneſs.
Of this I'm not ſo abſolute a maſter.
I therefore beg you'll write, in Charlot's name
And character, a letter to my father;
And recommend me, as a friend of her's,
To his acquaintance,

RANDAL.

Sir, if you deſire it —
And yet —

Young WILMOT.

Nay, no objections — 'twill ſave time,
Moſt precious with me now. For the deception,
If doing what my Charlot will approve,
'Cauſe done for me and with a good intent,
Deſerves the name, I'll anſwer it myſelf.
If this ſucceeds, I purpoſe to defer
Diſcov'ring who I am till Charlot comes,
And thou, and all who love me. Ev'ry friend
Who witneſſes my happineſs to-night,
Will, by partaking, multiply my joys.

RANDAL.

You grow luxurious in your mental pleaſures:

Cou'd

Cou'd I deny you aught, I wou'd not write
This letter. To ſay true, I ever thought
Your boundleſs curioſity a weakneſs.

Young WILMOT.

What canſt thou blame in this?

RANDAL.

Your pardon, Sir!
I only ſpeak in general: I'm ready
T'obey your order.

Young WILMOT.

I am much thy debtor,
But I ſhall find a time to quit thy kindneſs.
O Randal! but imagine to thyſelf
The floods of tranſport, the ſincere delight
That all my friends will feel, when I diſcloſe
To my aſtoniſh'd parents my return;
And then confeſs, that I have well contriv'd
By giving others joy t'exalt my own.
As pain, and anguiſh, in a gen'rous mind,
While kept conceal'd and to ourſelves confin'd,
Want half their force; ſo pleaſure when it flows
In torrents round us, more extatic grows.

(*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.

A Room in old WILMOT's *House.*

Old WILMOT *and* AGNES.

Old WILMOT.

Here, take this Seneca, this haughty pedant,
Who governing the master of mankind,
And awing power imperial, prates of patience;
And praises poverty possess'd of millions:
— Sell him, and buy us bread. The scantiest meal
The vilest copy of this book e'er purchas'd,
Will give us more relief in this distress,
Than all his boasted precepts — Nay, no tears;
Keep them to move compassion when you beg.

AGNES.

My heart may break, but never stoop to that.

Old WILMOT.

Nor wou'd I live to see it - - - but dispatch.

(*Exit* AGNES.

Where must I charge this lenght of misery,
That

That gathers force each moment as it rolls,
And muſt at laſt o'erwhelm me but, on hope,
Vain, flattering, deluſive, groundleſs hope;
A ſenſeleſs expectation of relief
That has for years deceiv'd me? - - - Had I thought
As I do now, as wiſe men ever think,
When firſt this hell of poverty o'ertook me,
That power to die implies a right to do it,
And ſhou'd be us'd when life becomes a pain,
What plagues had I prevented? - - - True, my wife
Is ſtill a ſlave to prejudice and fear - - -
I would not leave my better part, the dear
(Weeps.
Faithful companion of my happier days,
To bear the weight of age and want alone.
— I'll try once more. —

Enter AGNES, *and after her* young WILMOT.

Old WILMOT.

Return'd, my life, ſo ſoon! —

AGNES.

The unexpected coming of this ſtranger
Prevents my going yet.

Young WILMOT.

You're, I presume,
The gentleman to whom this is directed.
(Gives a Letter.
What wild neglect, the token of despair,
What indigence, what misery appears
In each disorder'd, or disfurnish'd room
Of this once gorgeous house? what discontent,
What anguish and confusion fill the faces
Of its dejected owners? *(Aside.*

Old WILMOT.

Sir, such welcome
As this poor house affords, you may command.
Our ever friendly neighbour - - - once we hop'd
T' have call'd fair Charlot by a dearer name - - -
But we have done with hope - - - I pray excuse
This incoherence - - - we had once a son.
(Weeps.

AGNES.

That you are come from that dear virtuous maid,
Revives in us the memory of a loss,
Which, tho' long since, we have not learn'd to bear.

Young

Young WILMOT.

The joy to ſee them, and the bitter pain
It is to ſee them thus, touches my ſoul
With tenderneſs and grief, that will o'erflow.
My boſom heaves and ſwells, as it wou'd burſt;
My bowels move, and my heart melts within me.
--- They know me not, and yet, I fear, I ſhall
Defeat my purpoſe, and betray miſelf.
(*Aſide.*

Old WILMOT.

The lady calls you here her valu'd friend;
Enough, tho' nothing more ſhould be imply'd,
To recommend you to our beſt eſteem
--- A worthleſs acquiſition! -- may ſhe find
Some means that better may expreſs her kindneſs;
But ſhe, perhaps, hath purpos'd to inrich
You with herſelf, and end her fruitleſs ſorrow
For one whom death alone can juſtify
For leaving her ſo long. If it be ſo,
May you repair his loſs, and be to Charlot
A ſecond, happier Wilmot. Partial nature,
Who only favours youth, as feeble age
Were not her offſpring or below her care,

Has seal'd our doom: no second hope shall spring
From my dead loins, and Agnes' steril womb,
To dry our tears, and dissipate despair.

AGNES.

The last and most abandon'd of our kind,
By heaven and earth neglected or despis'd,
The loathsome grave, that robb'd us of our son
And all our joys in him, must be our refuge.

Young WILMOT.

Let ghosts unpardon'd, or devoted fiends,
Fear without hope, and wail in such sad strains;
But grace defend the living from despair.
The darkest hours precede the rising sun;
And mercy may appear, when least expected.

Old WILMOT.

This I have heard a thousand times repeated,
And have, believing, been as oft deceiv'd.

Young WILMOT.

Behold in me an instance of its truth.
At sea twice shipwreck'd, and as oft the prey
Of lawless pirates; by the Arabs thrice
Surpriz'd, and robb'd on shore; and once reduc'd

To worſe than theſe, the ſum of all diſtreſs
That the moſt wretched feel on this ſide hell,
Ev'en ſlavery itſelf: yet here I ſtand,
Except one trouble that will quickly end,
The happieſt of mankind.

Old WILMOT.

A rare example
Of fortune's caprice; apter to ſurprize,
Or entertain, than comfort, or inſtruct.
If you wou'd reaſon from events, be juſt,
And count, when you eſcap'd, how many periſh'd;
And draw your inf'rence thence.

AGNES.

Alas! who knows,
But we were render'd childleſs by ſome ſtorm,
In which you, tho' preſerv'd, might bear a part.

Young WILMOT.

How has my curioſity betray'd me
Into ſuperfluous pain! I faint with fondneſs;
And ſhall, if I ſtay longer, ruſh upon 'em,
Proclaim myſelf their ſon, kiſs and embrace 'em
Till their ſouls, tranſported with the exceſs
Of pleaſure and ſurprize, quit their frail manſions,

And leave 'em breathleſs in my longing arms.
By circumſtances then and ſlow degrees,
They muſt be let into a happineſs
To great for them to bear at once, and live:
That Charlot will perform: I need not feign
Too aſk an hour for reſt. *(Aſide.)* Sir, I intreat
The favour to retire where, for a while,
I may repoſe myſelf. You will excuſe
This freedom, and the trouble that I give you:
'Tis long ſince I have ſlept, and nature calls.

Old WILMOT.

I pray, no more: believe we're only troubled,
That you ſhoud tink any excuſe were needful.

Young WILMOT.

The weight of this is ſome incumbrance to me
(Takes a caſket out of his boſom and gives it to his mother.)
And its contents of value: if you pleaſe
To take the charge of it till I awake,
I ſhall not reſt the worſe. If I ſhou'd ſleep
'Till I am aſk'd for, as perhaps I may,
I beg that you wou'd wake me.

AGNES.

Doubt it not:
Diſtracted as I am with various woes,
I ſhall remember that. (*Exit.*

Young WILMOT.

Mercileſs grief!
What ravage has it made! how has it chang'd
Her lovely form and mind! I feel her anguiſh,
And dread I know not what from her deſpair.
My father too — O grant 'em patience, heaven!
A little longer, a few ſhort hours more,
And all their cares, and mine, ſhall end for ever.
How near is miſery and joy ally'd!
Nor eye, nor thought can their extremes divide;
A moment's ſpace is long, and light'ning flow
To fate deſcending to reverſe our woe,
Or blaſt our hopes, and all our joys o'erthrow.

(*Exeunt.*

ACT

ACT III.

SCENE I.

The Scene continued.

Enter AGNES *alone, with the Caſket in her hand.*

Who ſhou'd this ſtranger be? — and then this caſket —
He ſays it is of value, and yet truſts it,
As if a trifle, to a ſtranger's hand —
His confidence amazes me — Perhaps
It is not what he ſays — I'm ſtrongly tempted
To open it, and ſee — no, let it reſt.
Why ſhould my curioſity excite me,
To ſearch and pry into th' affairs of others;
Who have t'imploy my thoughts, ſo many cares
And ſorrows of my own? — With how much eaſe
The ſpring gives way! — Surprizing! moſt prodigious!
My eyes are dazzled, and my raviſh'd heart
Leaps at the glorious ſight — How bright's the luſtre,
How immenſe the worth of theſe fair jewels!
Ay,

Ay, ſuch a treaſure wou'd expel for ever
Baſe poverty, and all it's abject train;
The mean devices we're reduc'd to uſe
To keep out famine, and preſerve our lives
From day to day; the cold neglect of friends;
The galling ſcorn, or more provoking pity
Of an inſulting world — Poſſeſs'd of theſe,
Plenty, content, and power might take their turn,
And lofty pride bare its aſpiring head
At our approach, and once more bend before us.
— A pleaſing dream! — 'Tis paſt; and now I wake
More wretched by the happineſs I've loſt;
For ſure it was a happineſs to think,
Tho' but for a moment, ſuch a treaſure mine.
Nay, it was more than thought — I ſaw and touch'd
The bright temptation, and I ſee it yet —
'Tis here — 'tis mine — I have it in poſſeſſion —
— Muſt I reſign it? muſt I give it bak?
Am I in love with miſery and want? —
To rob myſelf and court ſo vaſt a loſs; —
— Retain it then — But how? — There is a way —
Why ſinks my heart? why does my blood 'run cold?

Why

Why am I thrill'd with horror? — 'Tis not choice,
But dire neceſſity ſuggeſt the thought.

Enter old WILMOT.

Old WILMOT.

The mind contented, with how little pains
The wand'ring ſenſes yield to ſoft repoſe,
And die to gain new life! He's fall'n aſleep.
Already — happy man! — What doſt thou think,
My Agnes, of our unexpected gueſt?
He ſeems to me a youth of great humanity:
Juſt ere he clos'd his eyes, that ſwam in tears,
He wrung my hand, and preſs'd it to his lips;
And with a look, that pierc'd me to the ſoul,
Begg'd me to comfort thee: and — doſt thou hear me?
What art thou gazing on? — fie, 'tis not well —
This caſket was deliver'd to you clos'd:
Why have you open'd it? ſhou'd this be known,
How mean muſt we appear?

AGNES.

And who ſhall know it?

Old

Old WILMOT.

There is a kind of pride, a decent dignity
Due to ourſelves; which, ſpite of our misfortunes,
May be maintain'd, and cheriſh'd to the laſt.
To live without reproach, and without leave
To quit the world, ſhews ſovereign contempt,
And noble ſcorn of its relentleſs malice.

— AGNES.

Shews ſovereign madneſs and a ſcorn of ſenſe.
Purſue no farther this deteſted theme:
I will not die, I will not leave the world
For all that you can urge, until compell'd.

Old WILMOT.

To chace a ſhadow, when the ſetting ſun
Is darting his laſt rays, were juſt as wiſe,
As your anxiety for fleeting life,
Now the laſt means for its ſupport are failing:
Were famine not as mortal as the ſword,
This warmth might be excus'd — But take thy choice:
Die how you will, you ſhall not die alone.

AGNES.

Nor live, I hope.

Old WILMOT.

There is no fear of that.

AGNES.

Then we'll live both.

Old WILMOT.

Strange folly! where's the means?

AGNES.

The means are there; thoſe jewels —

Old WILMOT.

Ha! — Take heed:
Perhaps thou doſt but try me; yet take heed,
There's nought ſo monſtrous but the mind of man
In ſome conditions may be brought t'approve;
Theft, ſacrilege, treaſon, and parricide,
When flatt'ring opportunity intic'd,
And deſperation drove, have been committed
By thoſe who once wou'd ſtart to hear them nam'd.

AGNES.

And add to theſe deteſted ſuicide,
Which, by a crime much leſs, we may avoid.

Old

Old WILMOT.

Th' inhospitable murder of our guest! —
How cou'dst thou form a thought so very tempting,
So advantageous, so secure and easy;
And yet so cruel, and so full of horror?

AGNES.

'Tis less implety, less against nature,
To take another's life, than end our own.

Old WILMOT.

It is no matter, whether this or that
Be, in itself, the less or greater crime:
However we may deceive ourselves or others,
We act from inclination, not by rule,
Or none could act amiss — and that, all err,
None but the conscious hypocrite denies.
— O! what is man, his excellence and strength,
When in an hour of trial and desertion,
Reason, his noblest power, may be suborn'd
To plead the cause of vile assassination!

AGNES.

You're too severe; reason may justly plead
For her own preservation.

Old WILMOT.

Reſt contented:
Whate'er reſiſtance I may ſeem to make,
I am betray'd within: my will's ſeduc'd,
And my whole ſoul infected. The deſire
Of life returns, and brings with it a train
Of appetites that rage to be ſupply'd.
Who ever ſtands to parley with temptation,
Does it to be o'ercome.

AGNES.

Then nought remains,
But the ſwift execution of a deed
That is not to be thought on, or delay'd.
We muſt diſpatch him ſleeping: ſhou'd he wake,
'Twere madneſs to attempt it.

Old WILMOT.

True, his ſtrength
Single is more, much more than ours united;
So may his life, perhaps, as far exceed
Ours in duration, ſhou'd he 'ſcape this ſnare,
Gen'rous, unhappy man! O! what cou'd move thee
To but thy life and fortune in the hands
Of wretches mad with anguiſh!

AGNES.

By what means?
By ſtabbing, ſuffocation, or by ſtrangling
Shall we effect his death?

Old WILMOT.

Why, what a fiend! —
How cruel, how remorſeleſs and impatient
Have pride, and poverty made thee?

AGNES.

Barbarous man!
Whoſe waſteful riots ruin'd our eſtate,
And drove our ſon, ere the firſt down had ſpread
His roſy Cheeks ſpite of my ſad preſages,
Earneſt intreaties, agonies and tears,
To ſeek his bread 'mongſt ſtrangers, and to periſh
In ſome remote, inhoſpitable land —
The lovelieſt youth, in perſon and in mind,
That ever crown'd a groaning mother's pains!
Where was thy pity, where thy patience then?
Thou cruel husband! thou unnat'ral father!
Thou moſt remorſeleſs, moſt ungrateful man,
To waſte my fortune, rob me of my ſon;
To drive me to deſpair, and then reproach me
For being what thou'ſt made me.

Old WILMOT.

Dry thy tears:
I ought not to reproach thee. I confeſs
That thou haſt ſuffer'd much: ſo have we both.
But chide no more: I'm wrought up to thy purpoſe.
The poor, ill-fated, unſuſpecting victim,
Ere he reclin'd him on the fatal couch,
From which he's ne'er to riſe, took off the ſaſh,
And coſtly dagger that thou ſaw'ſt him wear;
And thus, unthinking, furniſh'd us with arms
Againſt himſelf. Which ſhall I uſe?

AGNES.

The ſaſh.
If you make uſe of that I can aſſiſt.

Old WILMOT.

No — 'tis a dreadful office, and I'll ſpare
Thy trembling hands the guilt — ſteal to the door
And bring me word if he be ſtill aſleep.

(*Exit* AGNES.

Or I'm deceiv'd, or he pronounc'd himſelf
The happieſt of mankind. Deluded wretch!
Thy thoughts are periſhing, thy youthful joys,

Touch'd

Touch'd by the icy hand of grisly death,
Are withering in their bloom — but thought extinguiſht,
He'll never know the loſs, nor feel the bitter
Pangs of diſappointment — then I was wrong
In counting him a wretch: to die well pleas'd,
Is all the happieſt of mankind can hope for.
To be a wretch, is to ſurvive the loſs
Of every joy, and even hope itſelf,
As I have done — why do I mourn him then?
For, by the anguiſh of my tortur'd ſoul,
He's to be envy'd, if compar'd with me.

Enter AGNES *with* young WILMOT'S *dagger.*

AGNES.

The ſtranger ſleeps at preſent; but ſo reſtleſs
His ſlumbers ſeem, they can't continue long.
Come, come, diſpatch — Here I've ſecur'd his dagger.

Old WILMOT.

O Agnes! Agnes! if there be a hell,
'Tis juſt we ſhou'd expect it.
(Goes to take the dagger but lets it fall.

AGNES.

Nay, for ſhame,
Shake off this panick, and be more your-
ſelf.

Old WILMOT.

What's to be done? on what had we deter-
min'd?

AGNES.

You're quite diſmay'd. I'll do the deed my-
ſelf.

(Takes up the dagger.

Old WILMOT.

Give me the fatal ſteel!
'Tis but an ſingle murder,
Neceſſity, impatience and deſpair,
The three wide mouths of that true Cerbe-
rus,
Grim poverty, demands — They ſhall be
ſtopp'd.
Ambition, perſecution, and revenge
Devour their millions daily: and ſhall I —
But follow me, and ſee how little cauſe
You had to think there was the leaſt re-
mains
Of manhood, pity, mercy, or remorſe
Left in this ſavage breaſt.

(Going the wrong way.

AGNES.

Where do you go?
The ſtreet is that way.

Old WILMOT.

True! I had forgot.

AGNES.

Quite, quite confounded.

Old WILMOT.

Well, I recover.
— I ſhall find the way. *(Exit.*

AGNES.

O ſoftly! ſoftly!
The leaſt noiſe undoes us. — Still I fear him:
— No — now he ſeems determin'd — O! that pauſe,
That cowardly pauſe! — his reſolution fails —
'Tis wiſely done to lift your eyes to heaven;
When did you pray before? I have no patience —
How he ſurveys him! what a look was there! —
How full of anguiſh, pity and remorſe! —
He'll never do it — Strike, or give it o'er —

— No, he recovers — but that trembling arm
May miſs its aim; and if he fails, we're loſt —
'Tis done — O! no; he lives, he ſtruggles yet.

Young WILMOT.

O! father! father! *(In another Room.*

AGNES.

Quick, repeat the blow.
What pow'r ſhall I invoke to aid thee, Wilmot!
— Yet hold thy hand — inconſtant, wretched woman!
What doth my heart recoil, and bleed with him
Whoſe murder was contriv'd — O Wilmot! Wilmot!

Enter CHARLOT, MARIA, EUSTACE, RANDAL *and others.*

CHARLOT.

What ſtrange neglect! the doors are all unbarr'd,
And not a living creature to be ſeen.

Enter WILMOT *and* AGNES.

CHAR-

CHARLOT.

Sir, we are come to give and to receive
A thouſand greetings — Ha! what can this mean?
Why do you look with ſuch amazement on us?
Are theſe your tranſports for your ſon's return? —
Where is my Wilmot? has he not been here?
Wou'd he defer your happineſs ſo long,
Or cou'd a habit ſo diſguiſe your ſon,
That you refus'd to own him?

AGNES.

Heard you that?
What prodigy of horror is diſcloſing,
To render murder venial!

Old WILMOT.

Prithee, peace:
The miſerable damn'd ſuſpend their howling,
And the ſwift orbs are fixt in deep attention.

Young WILMOT *groans.*

Oh! Oh! Oh!

EUSTACE.

Sure that deep groan came from the inner room.

RANDAL.

It did; and ſeem'd the voice of one expiring.
Merciful heaven! where will theſe horrors end?
That is the dagger my young maſter wore;
And ſee, his father's hands are ſtain'd with blood.

(Young WILMOT *groans again.*

EUSTACE.

Another groan! why do we ſtand to gaze
On theſe dumb phantoms of deſpair and horror?
Let us ſearch farther? Randal, ſhew the way.

CHARLOT.

This is the third time thoſe fantaſtick forms
Have forc'd themſelves upon my mental eyes,
And ſleeping gave me more than waking pains.
O you eternal pow'rs! if all your mercy
To wretched mortals be not quite extinguiſh'd,
And terrors only guard your awful thrones,

Remove this dreadful viſion — let me wake,
Or ſleep the ſleep of death.

(*Exeunt* CHAR. MARIA, EUST. RANDAL, etc.

Old WILMOT.

Sleep thoſe who may;
I know my lot is endleſs perturbation.

AGNES.

Let life forſake the earth, and light the ſun,
And death and darkneſs bury in oblivion
Mankind and all their deeds, that no poſterity
May ever riſe to hear our horrid tale,
Or view the grave of ſuch deteſted parricides.

Old WILMOT.

Curſes and imprecations are in vain:
The ſun will ſhine and all things have their courſe.
When we, the curſe and burthen of the earth,
Shall be abſorb'd, and mingled with its duſt,
Our guilt and deſolation muſt be told,
From age to age, to teach deſponding mortals,
How far beyond the reach of human thought

Hea-

Heaven, when incens'd, can puniſh — die thou firſt! *(Stabs* AGNES.
I dare not truſt thy weakneſs.

AGNES.

Ever kind,
But moſt in this.

Old WILMOT.

I will not long ſurvive thee.

AGNES.

Do not accuſe thy erring mother, Wilmot!
With too much rigour when we meet above.
Rivers of tears, and ages ſpent in howling
Cou'd ne'er expreſs the anguiſh of my heart.
To give thee life for life, and blood for blood
Is not enough. Had I ten thouſand lives,
I'd give them all to ſpeak my penitence
Deep and ſincere, and equal to my crime.
(Dies.

Enter CHARLOT *led by* MARIA, *and* RANDAL; EUSTACE *and the reſt.*

CHARLOT.

Welcome, deſpair! I'll never hope again —
Why

Why have you forc'd me from my Wilmot's ſide?
Let me return — unhand me — let me die.
Patience, that till this moment ne'er forſook me,
Has took her flight; and my abandon'd mind,
Rebellious to a lot ſo void of mercy
And ſo unexpected, rages to madneſs.
— O thou! who know'ſt our frame, who know'ſt theſe woes
Are more than human fortitude can bear,
O! take me, take me hence, ere I relapſe:
And in diſtraction, with unhallow'd tongue,
Again arraign your mercy. *(Faints.*

EUSTACE.

Unhappy maid! this ſtrange event my ſtrength
Can ſcarce ſupport! no wonder thine ſhou'd fail.
— How ſhall I vent my grief! O Wilmot! Wilmot!
Thou trueſt lover, and thou beſt of friends,
Are theſe the fruits of all thy anxious cares
For thy ungrateful parents? — cruel fiends

To

To uſe thee thus! — To recompenſe with death
Thy moſt unequall'd duty and affection.

Old WILMOT.

What whining fool art thou, who wou'd'ſt uſurp
My ſovereign right of grief? was he thy ſon?
Say! canſt thou ſhew thy hands reeking with blood,
That flow'd, thro' purer channels, from thy loins?

EUSTACE.

Forbid it heaven! that I ſhou'd know ſuch guilt:
Yet his ſad fate demands commiſeration.

Old WILMOT.

Compute the ſands that bound the ſpacious ocean,
And ſwell their number with a ſingle grain;
Increaſe the noiſe of thunder with thy voice;
Or when the raging wind lays nature waſte,
Aſſiſt the tempeſt with thy feeble breath;
Add water to the ſea, and fire to Etna;

But

But name not thy faint ſorrow with the anguiſh
Of a curſt wretch who only hopes for this
To change the ſcene, but not relieve his pain.
(Stabbing himſelf.

RANDAL.

O dreadful inſtance of the laſt remorſe!
May all your woes end here.

Old WILMOT.

O would they end
A thouſand ages hence, I then ſhou'd ſuffer
Much leſs than I deſerve. Yet let me ſay,
You'll do but juſtice, to inform the world,
This horrid deed, that puniſhes itſelf,
Was not intended as he was our ſon;
For that we knew not, till it was too late.
Proud and impatient under our afflictions,
While heaven was labouring to make us happy,
We brought this dreadful ruin on ourſelves.
Mankind may learn — but — oh! —
(Dies.

RANDAL.

The moſt will not:
Let

Let us at leaſt be wiſer, nor complain
Of heaven's myſterious ways, and awful reign:
By our bold cenſures we invade his throne
Who made mankind, and governs but his own:
Tho' youthful Wilmot's ſun be ſet ere noon,
The ripe in virtue never die too ſoon.

(Exeunt.

The End.

INDEX.

To *answer* (for) *something*, für etwas ſtehen, etwas verantworten.

to *arraign*, anklagen, beſchuldigen, eigentlich vor Gericht.

barren, ſaftlos, dürr, verödet.

boiſterous, windſtürmiſch.

bubble, eine Waſſerblaſe. *he is his own bubble*, er iſt ſein eigner Düpe, er hintergeht ſich ſelbſt.

but for — durch dieſe zwei Wörter neben einander geſtellt, gewinnt die engliſche Struktur eine beſondre Kürze. Gemeiniglich kan man ſie ſich durch *niſi propter* erklären; doch muſs die Bedeutung davon immer erſt durch den Zuſammenhang beſtimmt werden. A. 2. ſc. 1. *but for one ſorrow, I could not bear the tranſport*, wenn ich nicht noch eine kummervolle Scene vor mir hätte, ſo würde

de ich die itzigen Freuden nicht faſſen können.

'cauſe, ſtatt *becauſe*.

to *cheriſh*, herzlich lieben, pflegen, nähren. *Patience ſhall cheriſh hope*, die Gedult ſoll meine Hoffnung nähren.

chilled, erfroren, erſtarrt.

to *chuſe*, vorziehen.

to *come* — *what came of thoſe?* wie gieng es jenen? wo kamen ſie hin? eigentlich, was wurde aus ihnen? denn *come* iſt hier blos eine durch den Sprachgebrauch entſtandene Zuſammenziehung von *become*.

conſcious, in dem Zuſtande der Seele, wo man ſich noch ſeiner bewuſt iſt, wo man die Beſonnenheit hat.

country, wird ſehr oft gebraucht für *native country*, das Vaterland.

the *curſe of curſes*, der härteſte, ſchwerſte Fluch, das ſchmerzendſte Elend. Dergleichen hebräiſch-artige Redensarten liebt

liebt die engl. Sprache, vorzüglich im poetiſchen Stil ſehr.

to *diſpatch*, einen in der Geſchwindigkeit hinrichten — wie man ſonſt ſagt: to *diſpatch a courier*.

done — *we have done with hope*, wir haben nun keine Hoffnung mehr; eigentlich, ſind fertig mit der Hoffnung, denn *I've done* heiſt: ich bin fertig, *j'ai fait*.

down, Pflaumfedern, der erſte Bart des Jünglings.

to *drown*, einen andern übertoben, überſchreyen, überſtimmen.

a *driving rain*, ein ſtarker, heftiger Regen.

events to come (ellipt. *which are* to come) künftige Begebenheiten. *All their days to come*, alle ihre künftigen Tage. So auch die Franz. *le tems à venir*.

to *fade*, verwelken von Blumen; verſchieſſen, ſich abtragen, von Kleidung.

to *fan*, mit einem Wedel das Feuer ſtärker anfachen, Die engl. Dichter brauchen dies Wort oft in ſchönen Metaphern: ſo auch Lillo, wo er ſagt, daſs bei ſtürmiſchem Wetter die höchſten Bergfichten ihre Häupter emporhüben, den Sturm ſtärker in Bewegung zu ſetzen (*to fan the ſtorm.*)

to a *fault*, bis zum Exceſs, bis zum Felerhaften.

to *feed on*, ſich womit ſpeiſen, von etwas leben.

fiend — dies Wort, wiewol es mit unſerm *Feind* von gleichem Stamm iſt, wird doch nur von böſen Geiſtern oder vom Satan gebraucht. Man ſagt niemals: *he is my fiend* ſtatt *he is my enemy*. Wo es alſo auch zuweilen für enemy geſetzt ſcheinen könnte, wie im 3ten Akt dieſes Stücks, ſo iſt doch immer von Feinden hölliſcher Art die Rede.

flocks, Heerden, aber *greges*; herds ſind *armenta*.

fluttering heart, ein vor Freude pochendes Herz.

a *fuſtian hero*, ein Held, der ein Galimathias, ampullas und ſeſquipedalia verba ſpricht. So ſagt man *a fuſtian ſtyle*.

galling, was die Haut abreibt, wie Feſſeln; daher überhaupt, ſchmerzend.

to *gape*, den Rachen aufſperren.

to *give over*, etwas aufgeben, unterlaſſen, einem andern überlaſſen.

gorgeous, prächtig, voll theurer Koſtbarkeiten.

greedy, gefräſſig, begierig, geitzig.

the *growing ſcene*, das wachſende, fortſchreitende Schauſpiel, der weitere Verfolg deſſelben.

high-minded, eigentlich groſs-ſeelicht, von groſſen edelmüthigen Geſinnungen.

hind, der Landmann.

to *join the happy dead*, für to join *us with* the happy dead. Dieſe zwei Wörter läſt die engl. Sprache in mehrern ähnlichen Redensarten weg, als *to addreſs*

one, ſich an Jemand wenden, ſtatt, to addreſs *himſelf to* one.

to *keep out*, von ſich abhalten, den Zugang zu ſich verwehren.

level, eigentlich, eine Richtſchnur: oft läſt ſichs durch Klaſſe überſetzen, z. B. *to put on a level*, in eine Klaſſe ſetzen.

loathſome, ekelhaft, ſcheuslich, gräslich.

matter — ſteht oft für *matter of importance* — *no matter whence they fall*, daran liegt nichts, woher ſie kommen; der Dichter läſt ſich unbekümmert, ob die ſchönen Sachen, die in ſeinem Drama geſagt werden, auch dem Charakter jeder Perſon hinlänglich angemeſſen ſind, oder ob vielmehr er ſelbſt durch das ganze Stück zu reden ſcheint.

to *mend his pace*, ſchneller fortgehen.

a *menial ſervant*, einer von den gemeinen Bedienten im Hauſe.

minſter, die Kathedral-Kirche.

the *moan*, das Stöhnen, Aechzen.

now — now we are try'd, da wir *izt* verſucht werden. Dieſe nachdrucksvolle Konſtruktion gebrauchen die Engländer noch zuweilen, ſo wie auch die Deutſchen: *nun du gekommen biſt*. Jenes ſolte alſo eigentlich heiſſen: *as we are now try'd*.

one — fair one, eine Schöne, ein Mädchen. *One* iſt hier blos ein Wort, das die Auslaſſung des Hauptworts ergänzt. Der Deutſche gebraucht in dieſem Fall gemeiniglich das bloſſe Adjectiv. Z. E. *my little ones (children)* meine Kleinen! *my fair one (woman)* meine Schöne &c.

oozy, (*ouzy*, *ouſy*, *owzy*) ſumpficht, moraſtig.

ore, eine Metallgrube.

ought, (ſtatt ſomething,) *nought* (ſtatt nothing.)

to *pamper*, ausfuttern, fett mäſten.

panick, (ſc. fright) ein plötzlicher aber zugleich

gleich leerer Schrecken; *terror panicus.*

patience has took her flight — Dem Anfänger zu Gefallen will ich bei dieſer Gelegenheit die Regel vom Genus der engliſchen Wörter etwas genauer entwickeln, weil ihm vielleicht ſonſt der Sinn mancher Stelle in gegenwärtigem Stück nicht genug einleuchten möchte, und auch dieſer Punct, wie ſo viele andre, in den Alltags-Grammatiken nur ſeicht und unvollſtändig abgehandelt iſt. Die engliſche Sprache folgt nemlich, wie in ihrem ganzen Bau überhaupt, ſo auch hier, vollkommen den Spuren der Natur und der philoſophiſchen Ordnung. In der Natur giebts zwei Geſchlechter, und eben ſo viel auch in der engl. Grammatik: Maſculinum und Femininum. Die ganze todte Natur, die ohne Geſchlecht iſt, hat alſo auch in der Sprache keins. (Dies letztere nennt man nun freilich aus verjährter Gewohnheit das *Genus Neutrum* — Wunderbar genug! kein Geſchlecht! und doch ein Geſchlecht!) Sehr einfach iſt folglich die Hauptregel vom engliſchen Genus: Wörter, welche Dinge bezeichnen, die in der Natur das männ-

männliche Geſchlecht haben, ſind g. Maſc., und Wörter, welche Dinge bezeichnen, die in der Natur das weibl. Geſchlecht haben, ſind g. Fem. Hiervon giebt es nun nur eine einzige Ausnahme, wodurch die engliſche Sprache im oratoriſchen und poetiſchen Stil einen auszeichnenden Vorzug vor allen übrigen erhält — daſs nemlich auch lebloſe Dinge, und Eigenſchaften die man als Abſtrakte denkt, wenn ſie durch eine Redefigur als Perſonen aufgeführt werden, demnach das männliche oder weibl. Geſchlecht annehmen. Alſo empfängt eine ſolche Perſonification ein deſto ſtärkeres Gepräge, der poetiſche Ausdruck gewinnt, indem er ſich hierdurch von dem proſaiſchen Stil mehr entfernen, und zu gröſſerer Lebhaftigkeit erheben kan, und die Züge eines Gemäldes erſcheinen mit viel dauerhafteren Farben. Die Dichter bedienen ſich daher dieſer Manier ſehr häufig. Einige Exempel werden die Sache noch mehr ins Licht ſetzen. *Virtue, Earth, Nature, Reaſon, Patience, Poverty,* alle dieſe Wörter ſolten nach jener Hauptregel g. Neutr. ſeyn; die Dichterſprache aber erfodert, daſs ſie ein Geſchlecht annehmen, und da

erhalten *dieſe* das weibliche, (alle ſechs Wörter kommen hier und da in der Tragödie ſelbſt ſo vor.) Warum juſt das weibliche, gehört nicht hierher zu unterſuchen: Inzwiſchen kan es nicht ſchwer ſeyn, den Grund davon aufzufinden, weil die Uebereinſtimmung vieler andern Sprachen zu Hülfe kommt. Hier ſind noch einige andre Wörter, denen die Dichter öfters das eine oder andere Geſchlecht leihen: *death, thunder, torrent, ocean, mountain, time, heaven, ſun, chaos,* alle g. Maſc. — *moon, twilight, hell, fortune, vine, lake, region, night, mind, river, ſoil, morn, mold, pleaſure, diſcord,* g. Fem. Nun betrachte man die Kraft, die folgende Stellen durch dieſe Perſonification erhalten:

Pale *Melancholy* ſtalks from Hell
Th' abortive offſpring of *her* womb,
Deſpair and anguiſh round *her* yell.

Dr. Brown in der Cantate, the Cure of Saul.

See, how the *Morning* opes *her* golden gates,

And

And takes *her* farewell of the glorious Sun.

Shakeſp. ſecond part Henry VI. A. 2. ſc. 1.

Sweet are the uſes of Adverſity,
Which, like the toad, ugly and venomous,
Wears yet a precious jewel in *her* head.

Id. As you like it A. 2. ſc. 1.

the *thunder*,
Wing'd with red lightning and impetuous rage,
Perhaps hath ſpent *his* ſhafts.

Milton. P. L. B. 1. l. 174.

At his command th' uprooted *hills* retir'd
Each to *his* place, they heard his voice and went
Obſequious; *Heaven his* wonted face renew'd,
And with freſh flowrets hill and valley ſmil'd.

Ibid. B. 6. l. 781.

Man vergleiche *Par. loſt* IV, 599. 606. VII, 370 ſq. und beſonders ſeinen *Allegro*

Allegro und *Penſeroſo*. Ich führe nur noch folgende hierher gehörige Stelle aus *Home's Elements of Criticiſm* an: "The chaſtity of the Engliſh language, which in common uſage diſtinguiſhes by genders no words but what ſignify beings male and female, gives thus a fine opportunity for the proſopopoeia; a beauty unknown in other languages, where every word is maſculine or feminine." Vol. II. p. 235. cf. *Harris's philoſophical Enquiri concerning language and univerſal Grammar* pag. 58. Ich hoffe, man wird mir dieſe etwas lange Anmerkung, wenn ſie hier auch am unrechten Ort ſtehen ſolte, verzeihen.

to *paſs*, paſſer, über etwas wegkommen, über etwas hinwegſeyn, ſo daſs man keinen Teil mehr daran nehmen kan. *We have paſſed* (contr. *paſt*) *the danger*, wir ſind der Gefahr nun entgangen. — Nach deinem Tode wird man dich loben, *when thou art paſt hearing*, wenn du es nicht mehr wirſt hören können.

to *poſt*, ſchnell forteilen, fortrennen.

Prithee, (ſtatt *I pray thee*) ich bitte dich, ſag mir doch.

proli-

prolific, eigentlich, was fruchtbar macht (prolem faciens.) *the prolific ocean*, die See, aus welcher der Menſch ſich viele Nahrung ziehen kan.

to *quit a kindneſs*, eine Gefälligkeit erwiedern.

reach, die Erreichung. *He is beyond the reach of my power*, er iſt über die Erreichung meiner Macht hinaus, meine Macht kan ihn nicht mehr erreichen. *This is beyond the reach of human thought*, dies iſt mehr, als menſchliche Gedanken faſſen können.

to *recoil*, zurückſpringen vor Furcht, zurückbeben.

to *refine on happineſs*, auf Glückſeligkeit raffiniren, alle nur mögliche Mittel zur Vergröſſerung meines Glücks, meiner Freude hervorſuchen.

remorſeleſs, der keine Reue fühlt, daher *the remorſeleſs fate*, das harte, unerbittliche Schickſaal.

to *ruin*, ins Verderben, in den Untergang rennen. Eine ſeltene Bedeutung; ſonſt

ſonſt iſt dies Verbum immer tranſitiviſch.

ſaſh, ein ſeidener Leibgürtel.

a *ſcandal under which this people have lain*, ein übler, verhaſster Ruf, in welchem dieſe Leute geſtanden haben.

to *ſeize on*, ergreifen, ins Gefängniſs werfen.

to *ſhiver*, vor Kälte ſchaudern, it. in Stücke zerſpalten.

ſleet, ein ſchneeſtöbernder Regen.

ſpring, die Feder an einem Schloſs.

ſquare, ein Viereck, Winkelmaas. *on a ſquare*, gleichſam, nach der Richtſchnur, rechtſchaffen, aufrichtig, frey heraus, ohne Winkelzüge.

to *ſtalk*, mit langen Schritten, und ſanft auf den Zehen fortſchleichen. Dies iſt der gewöhnliche Ausdruck, den die engl. Dichter von dem Gehen eines Geiſtes brauchen.

ſtake, das Geld das man im Spiel ſetzt; daher to *ſtake*, aufs Spiel ſetzen, wagen.

to *ſuborn*, einem heimlich auftragen, was er zu unſerm Vorteil vor Gericht ſagen ſoll.

ſultry (oder *ſweltry*, wie es auch geſchrieben wird) ſchwül, von der Sommerhitze.

to *thrill*, durchbohren, durchdringen.

token, ein Zeichen, Anzeige, (teſſera.)

to *treaſure up*, aufbewahren als einen koſtbaren Schatz; ſorgfältig im Gedächtnis behalten.

turn — *to take his turn*, ſeine vorige Stelle wieder einnehmen.

to *vent* (ſonſt *to give vent*) auslaſſen, ausbrechen laſſen, eine Leidenſchaft.

very — *I was a very child*, ich war *noch ganz* ein Kind. to that *very* end, *eben* hierzu. our *very* thoughts, *ſelbſt* unſre Gedanken. Blos durch dergleichen Exempel und im Leſen durch den Ton der Stimme läſt ſich die Kraft dieſes Wört-

Wörtchens deutlich machen. Sehr oft kan man es durch das lat. *ipſe* ausdrücken, z. B. on the *very* top of the hill, in *ipſo* vertice montis, *ganz oben* auf des Hügels Spitze. Auch zuweilen durch das deutſche *ſchon*, oder *nur*; als: the *very* thought is dreadful, *ſchon* der Gedanke, *nur* dran zu gedenken iſt ſchrecklich.

unbridled (von *bridle*, der Zaum,) dem der Zaum abgenommen iſt, der ſeiner Feſſeln entledigt iſt. In dieſer letzten Bedeutung gebraucht Lillo das Wort von dem aufthauenden Waſſer.

unhand me, laſt eure Hände von mir los, haltet mich nicht!

to *wail*, heulen, wehklagen.

to *want*, manquer. — *ſhe wants me gone*, ſie wünſcht, daſs ich abweſend ſeyn möchte.

weary, müde, ermüdend.

wherewith und *wherewithal*, brauchen die Engländer, wie die Franzoſen ihr *de quoi*. *I have not left wherewith to purchaſe one ſingle meal*, ich habe nicht

nicht so viel mehr übrig, dafs ich eine einzige Mahlzeit dafür kaufen könnte.

to *work up*, einen wozu bringen, wozu vermögen, nach langen Bemühungen Jemand in seine Meinung ziehen.

ERRATA.

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Pag. 9. lin. 18. corr. *than* pro *thon*. p. 22. l. 18. *our* pro *out*. p. 27. l. 8. *mend it* pro *men dit*. p. 29. l. 1. *feel* pro *feal*. p. 36. l. 11. *knew* pro *know*. p. 47. l. 14. *means* pro *meens*. p. 49. l. 17. *try* pro *toy*. p. 53. l. 2. dele comma poſt *but*, et repone poſt *me*. p. 58. l. 5. *too great* pro *to*. ibid. l. 8. *to* pro *too*. p. 62. l. 3. *ſuggeſts* pro *ſuggeſt*. p. 65. l. 8. *impiety* pro *implety*. p. 66. l. 26. *put* pro *but*.

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